

**KPCC 89.3 AM**

July 2, 2004

***A Long-Term Development Vision for Southern California***

The Southern California Association of Governments issues a blueprint for long-term growth that relies on high-density urban housing near existing transportation corridors.

**Anchor:** Southern California is expected to grow by six million people over the next three decades. That's like transplanting everyone in the city of Chicago and moving them here, and then doing it again. The southland population is expected to grow a whopping 23 million. The Southern California Association of Governments spent the last couple of years grappling with how to plan for that growth. What emerged is a blueprint that attempts to prevent a sprawling nightmare. KPCC's Debra Baer reports.

**Baer:** The plan is called "Southern California Compass"- a long-term strategy to guide development and growth. Port Hueneme Mayor Toni Young is a Vice President with the Southern California Association of Governments, better known as SCAG. "Compass Growth Vision calls for mixed used development in centers and along major transportation corridors, and for the creation of new housing near jobs, and new jobs near housing." (Young) The plan relies on higher-density development than the traditional suburban sprawl, which characterizes the hodge-podge growth of the region. But it focuses primarily on urban areas near transportation centers and corridors- linking for example, Long Beach to downtown Los Angeles, and LA to Ontario. Right now there is little coordination among the region's six counties and 187 cities. So SCAG created computer models showing what the region would like 30 years hence without a comprehensive growth plan.

Consultant John Fregonese, an urban land planner, led the project. "It was high-congestion, practically couldn't move, areas that would continue to abandon, big pockets of poverty that would continue to grow... a lot of things didn't work."

SCAG then invited into the process community leaders and citizen groups, environmentalists as well as developers and builders- 1,300 people in all over two years. Planner Don Brackenbush says they were divided into groups, "Each group was given the land use chips that represented the growth in the region, and their mission was to devise an optimum land-use plan they would like to see for the county. What we found very early on is that the chips won't fit. We're going to have to develop more densely, our transportation system is lacking."

SCAG compiled the results and came up with the "Compass Plan" dealing with problems like air quality, commute time and housing shortages.

Again, consultant John Fregonese, "All these problems- they didn't go away but they got remarkably better, and we saw that the difference really was in development in these

areas that were centered around transportation corridors, that developed a more mixed use, higher density, transit friendly pedestrian manor.”

In the end, planners found that if they focus on strategically tying land use to transportation, they can reap the most benefits with the least negative effects. “So we bring forward to the community a new vision.”

Mark Pisano is the Executive Director of SCAG. The plan which took two years to design is expected to take six years to implement. “...with our cities, we will be working with individual jurisdictions over the next several years, to modify their general plans.”

SCAG has no real authority over the cities and counties of the region and convincing them to buy into the plan might prove as challenging as herding cats. But Pisano says SCAG has more than just a good argument. He says the agency can send transportation funds to cities that sign on. Pisano also hopes to get state lawmakers to create financial incentives. He says a lot is at stake. “By making these types of improvements, the collective quality of our environment, and the livability of our cities, and the sustainability of ecosystem, and finally the prosperity of the region will be enhanced.”

In Los Angeles, I’m Debra Baer 89.3 KPCC.